

Egypt: Construction of Primary Schools I/II

Ex-post evaluation

OECD sector	11220 – Primary school education	
BMZ project ID	1994 66 301	
Project-executing agency	General Authority for Educational Buildings (GAEB)	
Consultant	Dorsch Consult, Munich	
Year of ex-post evaluation	2004	
	Project appraisal (planned)	Ex-post evaluation (actual)
Start of implementation	Q 1 1996	Q 1 1996
Period of implementation	3 ½ years	5 years
Investment costs	EUR 38.1 million	EUR 37.8 million
Counterpart contribution	EUR 3.8 million	EUR 3.5 million
Financing, of which Financial Cooperation (FC) funds	EUR 34.3 million	EUR 34.3 million
Other institutions/donors involved	none	none
Performance rating	2	
• Significance/relevance	2	
• Effectiveness	2	
• Efficiency	3	

Brief Description, Overall Objective and Project Purposes with Indicators

The project “Construction of Primary Schools – Phase I/II” was designed as an open programme and comprises the construction, expansion and rehabilitation of primary schools in the governorates of Qena (Upper Egypt, north of Luxor) and Beheira (Nile Delta region). Additionally, co-financing was provided for school furniture, furnishings for the project-executing agency and a special fund for the ongoing maintenance of the building substance in which the share of Financial Cooperation (FC) funds progressively declines. Phases I and II are part of a serial project that has since grown to include five phases. Through the measures, 2,300 classrooms for about 80,000 primary schoolchildren were to be built or maintained.

The programme is to contribute to giving children of preschool and primary school age better access to primary schools as well as to improve the efficiency of the instruction at primary schools in the governorates covered by the programme (programme purposes). Indicators of achievement of these purposes were (a) an increase in enrollment rates to 65% for girls and at least 70% for boys; (b) class sizes of no more than 40 pupils in at least 80% of the classes funded; (c) at least 0.75 m² of space per pupil; and (d) use of the schools by only one school community (one shift only) in at least 80% of the programme schools. The overall objective of the project is to contribute to improving primary education. The project was designed to complement Egyptian school reform policy as well as programmes by other donors, above all

the Enhanced Education Program of the EU/World Bank. The project-executing agency is the General Authority for Educational Buildings (GAEB), which is part of the Ministry of Education.

Project Design / Major Deviations from the original Project Planning and their main Causes

The two programme governorates of Beheira and Qena were selected because they are particularly poor regions, which makes their socio-economic situation distinct. Both governorates were heavily influenced by agriculture and had an above-average proportion of poor urban and rural households at the time of the project appraisal.

The planning for the locations within the governorates was supported by a geographic information system which, among other things, made it possible to visualize the distribution of the schools and settlements and in this way facilitated the final selection of locations. In order to maintain the schools properly, the consultant helped to introduce a decentralized maintenance system that is available to individual schools upon submission of an application. In the first three years it will be financed to 70% out of Financial Cooperation (FC) funds and to 30% out of funds from the Egyptian schooling budget.

The FC project focused on eliminating the bottlenecks in the field of primary school construction (grades 1 through 5, as of 2004 also 6th grade). In Egypt the primary education cycle, i.e. mandatory period of education, is 8 years and will be 9 years in the future.

There were no major deviations from this project design.

Key Results of the Impact Analysis and Performance Rating

The programme measures contributed to increasing the density of the school network and to facilitating access to the primary schools. Overall, 2,437 instead of the planned 2,300 classrooms were built or rehabilitated. As a result, new or improved capacities for around 100,000 primary school pupils are available, approx. 20,000 more than expected at the time of the appraisal.

The project's contribution to reducing the illiteracy rate, which was expected in the appraisal, was satisfied in the form of additional capacity for schoolchildren. However, the performance of the children through the end of the fifth year of schooling varies greatly. Since massive nationwide campaigns to reduce the drop-out rate were conducted simultaneously and successfully, it is to be expected that the majority of the children formerly enrolled in school will now attend school for eight years (as of next year nine years) and receive a solid education. And yet, the programme measures (especially infrastructure) are not sufficient to increase the efficiency of instruction, as was intended. Apart from general sectoral changes, what is mainly needed here is measures to qualify teachers and methods that are oriented towards the schoolchildren.

Primary education is free in Egypt, but families incur costs for writing materials and often also for "voluntary" school uniforms. To prevent orphans or children from needy families from being unable to attend school for financial reasons, the schools may waive the fees in full or in part. Private lessons, which are common at most Egyptian schools but are not free, are a financial burden, however, and in individual cases may cost up to one-third of the family income. Although poor families with several children are particularly affected, no prohibitive impacts can be detected. A ban on the practice cannot be enforced since the success of the children at school depends on these extra lessons. Free afternoon instruction at a number of schools would be more effective.

The project primarily helps poor people and thereby helps reduce poverty directly. A comparison of the poverty lines in 1995/96 and 1999/2000 confirms the propriety of the selection of the two governorates with respect to the goal of poverty reduction. By reducing the distance to school the programme had specific positive effects on girls' enrollments and therefore on the above-average increase in the enrollment rate for girls. Neither the construction measures nor the newly built sanitary facilities including the necessary excrement disposal system had any environmental impacts worth mentioning.

Numerous multilateral and bilateral donors are active in Egypt's education sector. However, the progress in terms of quality, e.g. through the Education Enhanced Programme by the EU/World Bank which familiarizes teachers with new methods and teaching materials, has remained behind expectations. The curriculum reform announced quite some time ago has only been realized to a small degree, and the existing curricula cannot accommodate the new concepts. New curricula to be developed together with American consultants and experts were greeted with great scepticism. In collaboration with CARE, USAID is aiming for higher quality of education for girls in rural areas, and UNICEF is funding one-class schools in order to give girls who either do not have access to school education or who have dropped out of school a new opportunity to learn. Up to now the FC project and the GAEB have not sought enough cooperation on the local level with these initiatives to give teachers further training, encourage girls to go to school and parents to get involved. In the future they should focus on building up and strengthening these initiatives in the governorates covered by the programme.

Overall, the programme purposes were exceeded: at the time of the ex-post evaluation the gross enrollment rates were 100% in Qena (105% for boys and 95% for girls) and 95% in Beheira (100% for boys and 90% for girls). The requirements to reduce class sizes to 40 children and to cut back on teaching in shifts were met. On average, each school now has a good 1 m² of space for each pupil. Nevertheless, one problem involves the assumption of the maintenance of the schools once the maintenance fund co-financed through FC funds expires. It is possible that the maintenance will not be carried out to the degree required. In general, though, the schools will continue to receive support from the regular Egyptian maintenance programme. In terms of the overall objective the project made a quantitative contribution to improving primary education. The quality of the primary education did improve as intended - measured in terms of the repeat and dropout rates for the pupils - and yet the programme measures contributed to this only minimally. Therefore, we consider the overall objective to have been achieved only partially.

The summarized assessment of the developmental effectiveness of the project is based on the following key criteria:

We judge its effectiveness to be satisfactory (rating 2). All quantitative indicators of achievement of the programme purposes were exceeded, some of them substantially. This was reinforced by general and nationwide trends. As a result of the measures (improvement in the infrastructure and especially equipment of the schools and classrooms) the working conditions and the spirit at the programme schools have improved significantly. This did not have any effects on the quality of the instruction, however. There is still uncertainty regarding the proper maintenance of the classrooms by the decentralized maintenance system once the FC co-financing comes to an end.

In view of the scope and quality of the schools' student capacities that have been created, the programme's efficiency is deemed to be satisfactory (rating 2). Corrections and improvements in the construction and building design standards as well as the development of cost-efficient standard schools and furniture made it possible to provide 25% more places for pupils than originally planned.

The overall objective – to contribute to improving primary education – was achieved only in qualitative terms (better access for girls and boys), whereas qualitative impacts (indicators: reduction in the repeat and dropout rates) could not be generated to any noticeable degree by the FC measures, almost all of which were constructional or technical. In addition, impacts of programmes by other donors aiming to improve the quality of instruction were expected, yet they were generated to only a minimal degree owing to insufficient coordination on the Egyptian side. Closer cooperation on the local level to encourage girls to go to school, parents to get involved, and to offer teachers further training did not develop during the course of the project. Desirable structural impacts beyond the FC project were generated neither by the decentralized maintenance system nor by the geographic information system. Thus we judge the significance and relevance of the project to be sufficient (rating 3).

Overall the project “Construction of Primary Schools – Phase I/II” is judged to have a satisfactory degree of developmental effectiveness (rating 2).

General Conclusions for all Projects

No general conclusions could be drawn for all projects.

Legend

Developmentally successful: Ratings 1 to 3	
Rating 1	Very high or high degree of developmental effectiveness
Rating 2	Satisfactory degree of developmental effectiveness
Rating 3	Overall sufficient degree of developmental effectiveness
Developmental failures: Ratings 4 to 6	
Rating 4	Overall slightly insufficient degree of developmental effectiveness
Rating 5	Clearly insufficient degree of developmental effectiveness
Rating 6	The project is a total failure

Criteria for the Evaluation of Project Success

The evaluation of a project’s “developmental effectiveness” and its classification during the final evaluation into one of the various levels of success described in more detail below concentrate on the following fundamental questions:

- Are the project objectives reached to a sufficient degree (aspect of project effectiveness)?
- Does the project generate sufficient significant developmental effects (project relevance and significance measured by the achievement of the overall development-policy objective defined beforehand and its effects in political, institutional, socio-economic and socio-cultural as well as ecological terms)?
- Are the funds/expenses that were and are being employed/incurred to reach the objectives appropriate and how can the project’s microeconomic and macroeconomic impact be measured (aspect of efficiency of the project conception)?
- To the extent that undesired (side) effects occur, are these tolerable?

We do not treat **sustainability**, a key aspect to consider for project evaluation, as a separate category of evaluation but instead as a cross-cutting element of all four fundamental questions on project success. A project is sustainable if the project-executing agency and/or the target group are able to continue to use the project facilities that have been built for a period of time that is, overall, adequate in economic terms or to carry on with the project activities on their own and generate positive results after the financial, organizational and/or technical support has come to an end.